

FIRST
COMICS
LIMITED
SERIES
NO.1 of 3

THE P.I.'S

JAN. \$1.25
NO. 1
\$1.60 CANADA

MICHAEL MAJISER™ and MS. TREE™

plus! MIKE GRELL'S
TRIBUTE TO
MICKEY SPILLANE!



Stanton Beatty

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THE **PI's**

FOUR COLOR CRIME

part one: THE ODD COUPLE

THERE ARE 3,000,000 STORIES IN THE WINDY CITY... WELL, ACTUALLY, A FEW MORE THAN 3,000,000, AND BETTER THAN 7,000,000 IN THE GREATER METROPOLITAN AREA, AND COUNTING INDIANA, IT'S MORE LIKE...

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, LET'S JUST CALL IT 3,000,000 AND NOT GET TECHNICAL.

ANYWAY, THERE ARE 3,000,000 STORIES IN THE WINDY CITY, AND 300 PRIVATE DETECTIVES.

THESE ARE TWO OF THEM. AND THEIR STORIES ARE ABOUT TO CONVERGE—OR, RATHER, COLLIDE...

michael
MAUSER
private
eyeTM
created by
**NICOLA CUTI &
JOE STATON**

Ms. TREETM
created by
**MAX COLLINS &
TERRY BEATTY**

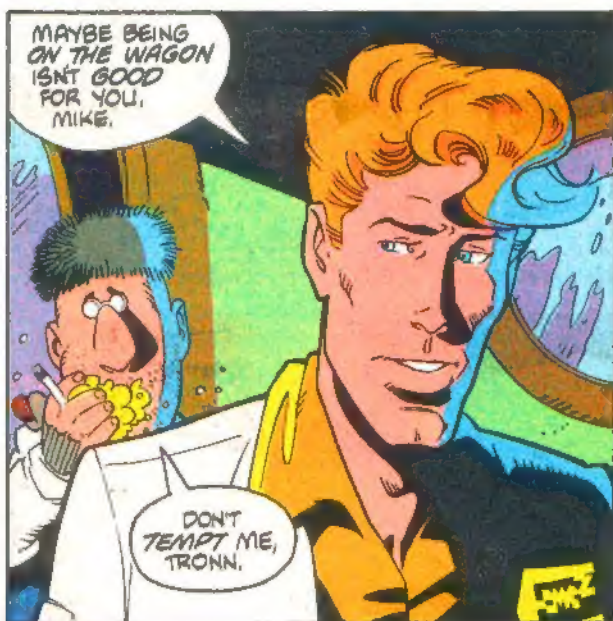
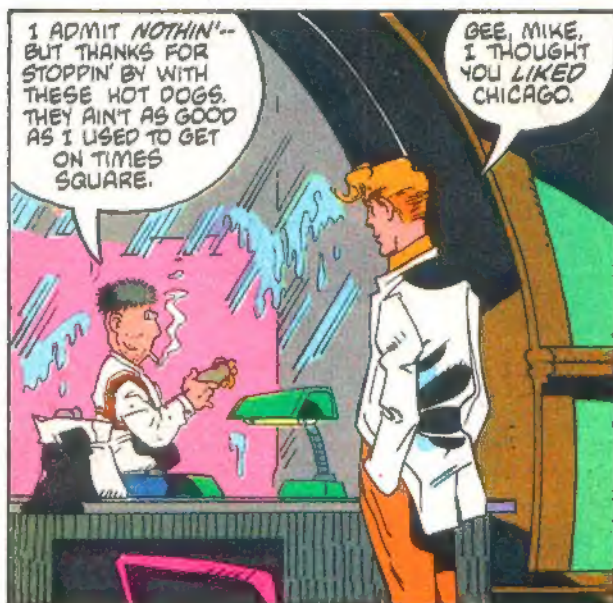
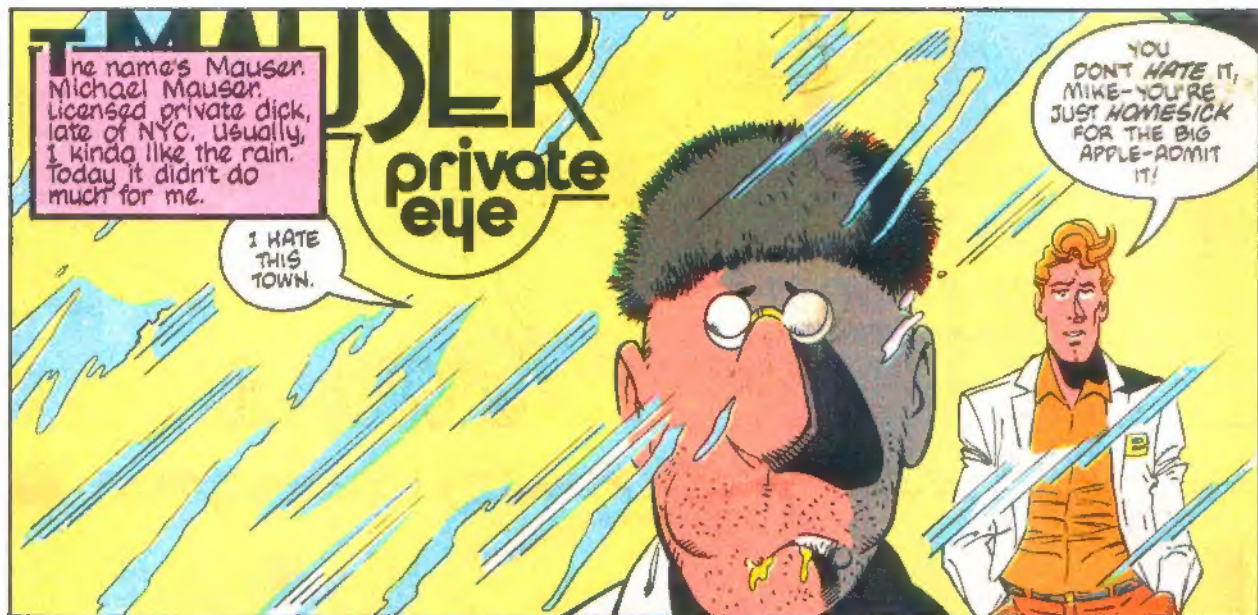
MAX COLLINS
writer

JOE STATON
penciller
TERRY BEATTY
inker

KEN BRUZENAK
letterer

WENDY FIORE
colorist

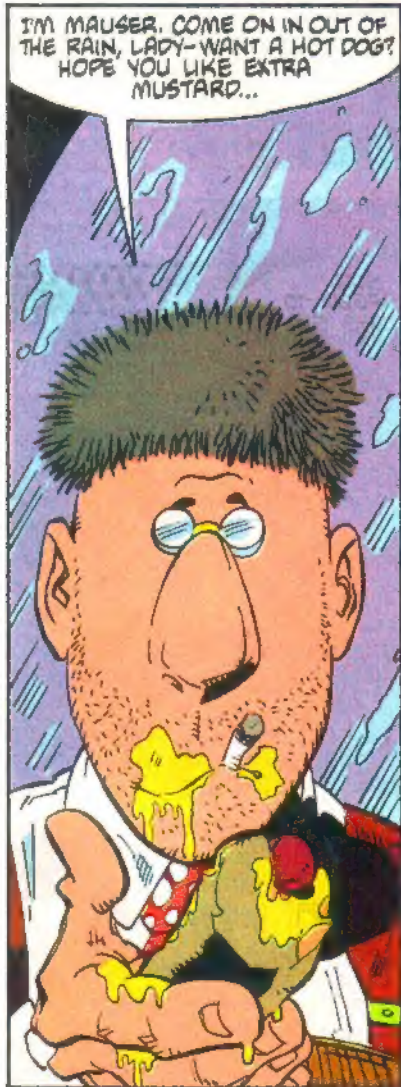
MIKE GOLD
editor



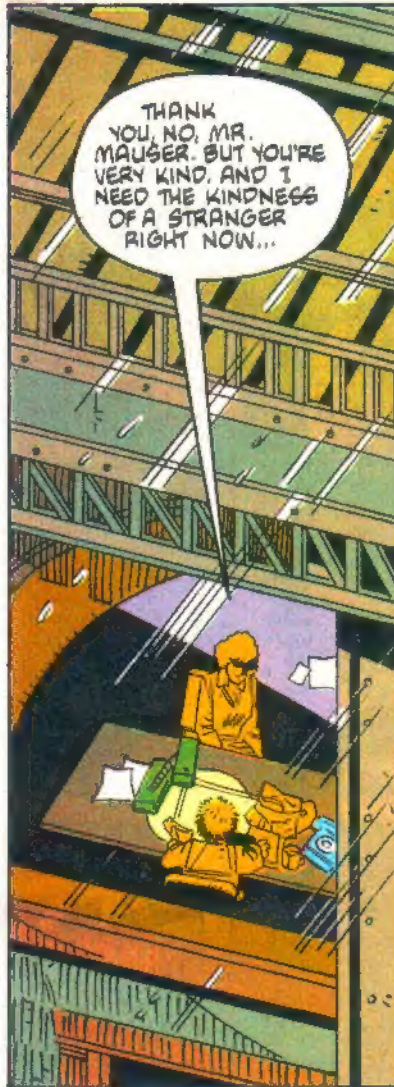


IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR MICHAEL MAUSER, YOU'LL FIND HIM INSIDE. SAY, DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE...?

SOMETHING FURRY GOING DOWN THE STAIRS? I THINK I DID...BUT I HAVE BEEN OVERWROUGHT OF LATE--



I'M MAUSER. COME ON IN OUT OF THE RAIN, LADY--WANT A HOT DOG? HOPE YOU LIKE EXTRA MUSTARD...



THANK YOU, NO, MR. MAUSER. BUT YOU'RE VERY KIND. AND I NEED THE KINDNESS OF A STRANGER RIGHT NOW...



THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR. KINDNESS, AT REASONABLE RATES.

I WANT YOU TO...I BELIEVE THE TERM IS "SHADOW"...MY HUSBAND. I... I SUSPECT HIM OF...SOB... FAITHLESSNESS.



managed to seem shocked by this news flash--but I was more shocked by the wad of green she pulled out of her purse.

UH, YEAH, MAYBE WE SHOULD TALK RETAINER ABOUT NOW--

WOULD \$1000 DO?

My name is *Michael Tree*. President of *Tree Investigations, Inc.*

I didn't realize it at the time, but the office I'd temporarily moved into was just a floor below one *Michael Mauser*, who is--marginally--in the same business as me.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A DETECTIVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT A MESS THIS PLACE IS, MS. TREE.

DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN, EFFIE--IT'S JUST FOR A MONTH OR SO, TILL OUR NEW OFFICES IN THE TOWERTOWN TOWER BUILDING ARE READY.

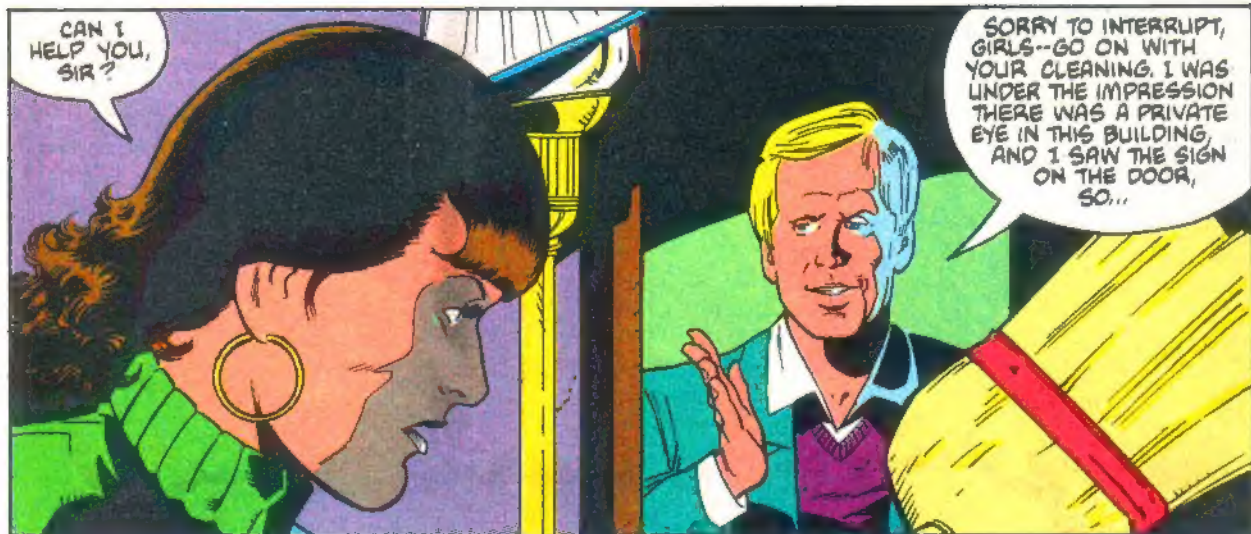
OH, IT DOESN'T GET ME DOWN--EXCEPT MAYBE ON THE FLOOR WITH A SCRUB BRUSH, WHAT'LL IT BE, MS. TREE--BROOM OR MOP?

YOU'RE MY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, EFFIE--MAKE AN EXECUTIVE DECISION!

I GUESS I'LL LET YOU HAVE THE BROOM--SINCE THE BAD GUYS ARE ALWAYS CALLING YOU A WITCH--GIVE OR TAKE A RHYME.

IS THAT A CLIENT COMING IN, MS. TREE? WE HAVEN'T ADVERTISED THIS ADDRESS--

MY GUNS IN THE TOP DESK DRAWER, EFFIE... TOSS IT TO ME, IF HE MAKES A MOVE...





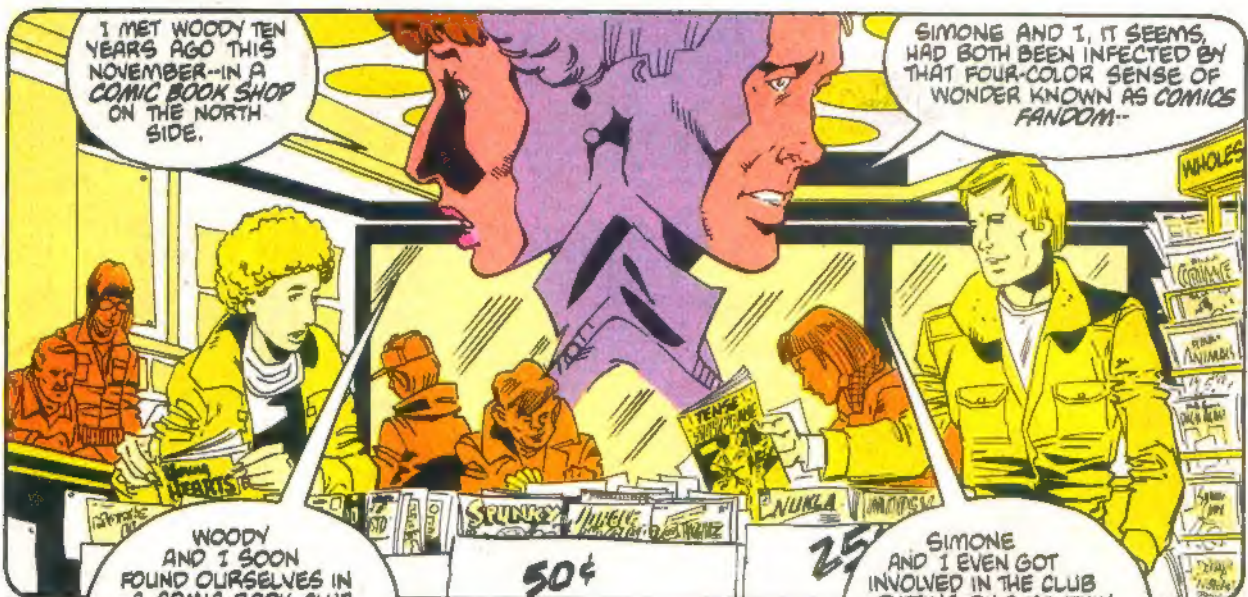
Her name was *Simone Kirby*, and where a quiet little middle-class gal like her got off tossing around thousand-buck retainers was a mystery I couldn't solve.

I LOVE MY HUSBAND VERY MUCH, MR. MAUSER.



His name was *Woodrow Kirby*—why would a straight-arrow, middle-class guy like him come around handing out a thousand-dollar retainer to a private investigator?

I LOVE MY WIFE VERY MUCH, MS. TREE.



I MET WOODY TEN YEARS AGO THIS NOVEMBER--IN A COMIC BOOK SHOP ON THE NORTH SIDE.

SIMONE AND I, IT SEEMS, HAD BOTH BEEN INFECTED BY THAT FOUR-COLOR SENSE OF WONDER KNOWN AS COMICS FANDOM--

WOODY AND I SOON FOUND OURSELVES IN A COMIC-BOOK CLUB, PUTTING TOGETHER A COMICS NEWSLETTER, WITH A LITTLE PASTE AND A LOT OF ENTHUSIASM--

SIMONE AND I EVEN GOT INVOLVED IN THE CLUB PUTTING ON A MONTHLY COMICS CONVENTION AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL. WE HAD A LOT IN COMMON--WE BOTH LOVED COMICS--AND, SOON, EACH OTHER.



"WOODY WAS SHY WHEN THE SUBJECT WAS ANYTHING BUT COMICS; SO ONE DAY I BROKE THE ICE--"

WOODY, I KNOW WE DON'T LIKE THE SAME COMICS--YOU LIKE YOUR CRIME AND HORROR BOOKS, AND ME--

WELL, ME--I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A ROMANTIC FOOL WHERE LOVE COMICS ARE CONCERNED. SO I HOPE I'M NOT BEING A FOOL WHEN I SAY--I THINK I'M FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU.

I LOVE YOU, TOO, SIMONE. I LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF--MORE THAN A COMPLETE RUN OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT.

"WHEN I HEARD WOODY SAY THAT, I KNEW THE NEXT THING I'D HEAR WOULD BE WEDDING BELLS."

"I NEVER DREAMED I'D FIND A GIRL LIKE SIMONE--SOMEONE WHO COULD ACCEPT ME AND MY COMIC BOOKS--"

SINCE WE WERE BOTH KIDS AT HEART, IT WAS NATURAL WOODY AND I WOULD WANT A FAMILY--BUT AFTER TEN YEARS OF TRYING, WE WERE STILL CHILDLESS--"

ADOPT? NOT ON YOUR LIFE?

OH, WOODY--WE COULD GIVE SOME POOR WONDERFUL CHILD A WONDERFUL HOME! WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

AFTER WEEKS OF ARGUING, WE FINALLY SETTLED INTO AN UNEASY TRUCE--BUT THEN--

YOU'RE GOING WHERE?

OUT TO THE MOVIES, WITH MY GIRL FRIEND SUZIE. WHERE DO YOU THINK?

"BUT LATER I CHECKED WITH SUZIE AND FOUND THAT SIMONE HAD NOT BEEN WITH HER..."

CAN YOU FOLLOW MY HUSBAND FOR ME, MR. MAUSER, AND FIND OUT WHERE HE'S REALLY GOING?

"MR. MAUSER, MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN BEHAVING SUSPICIOUSLY--LAST WEEK HE WENT OUT FOR A NIGHT OF BOWLING WITH THE BOYS--BUT I DISCOVERED HE WAS LYING!"

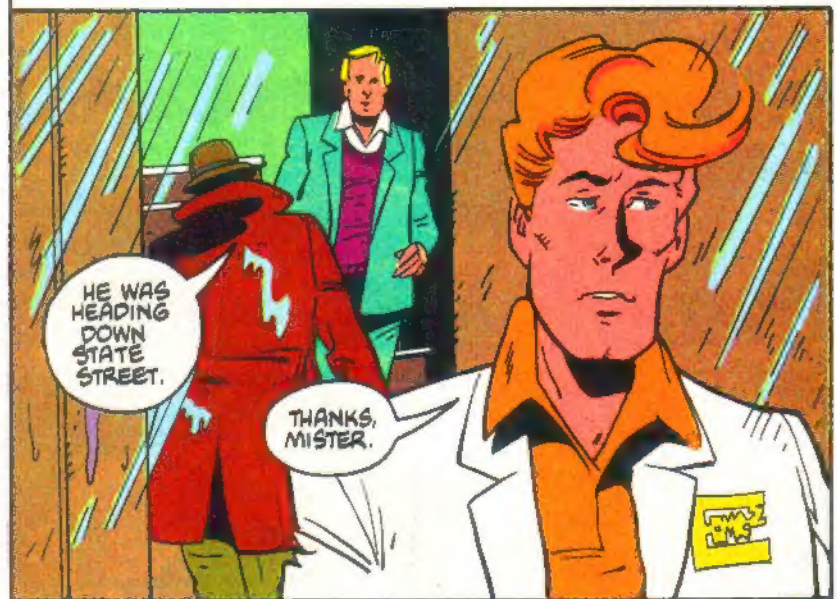
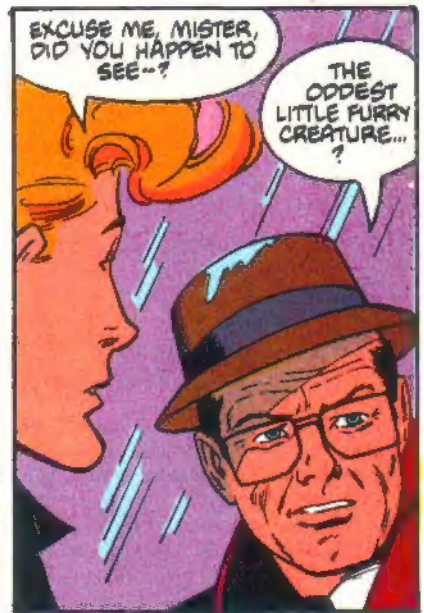
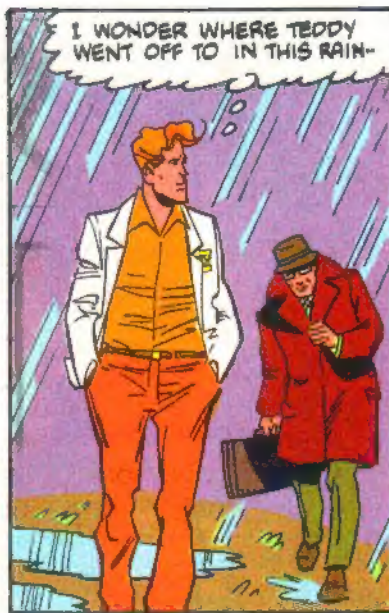
"I TRIED CONFRONTING SIMONE ABOUT IT, BUT SHE JUST MADE EXCUSES--"

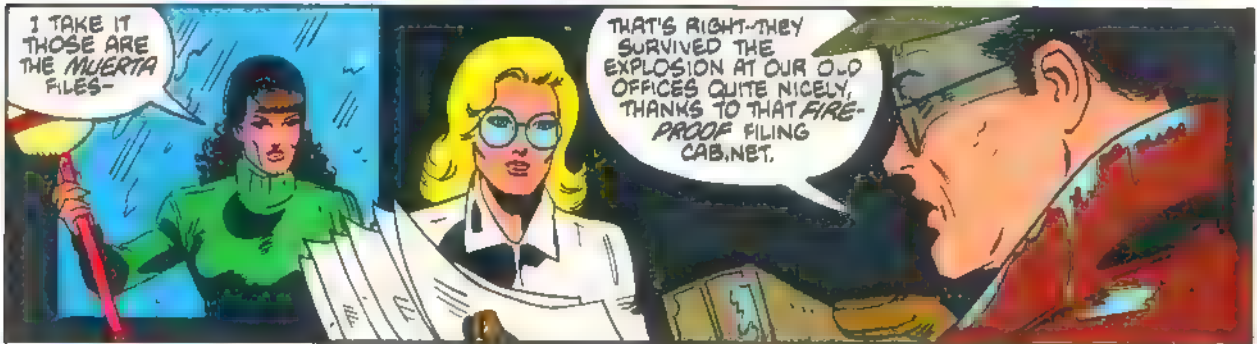
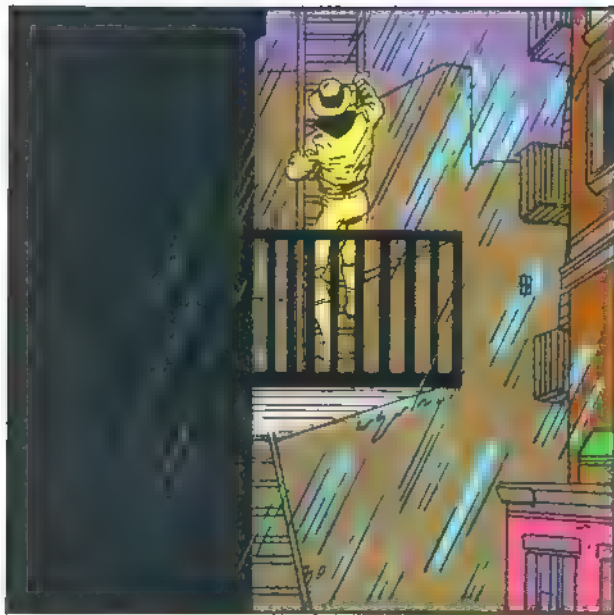
I HEADED FOR THE BOWLING ALLEY, BUT JUST WASN'T IN THE MOOD--STOPPED AT A BAR FOR A DRINK, TO THINK/ WHERE WERE YOU?

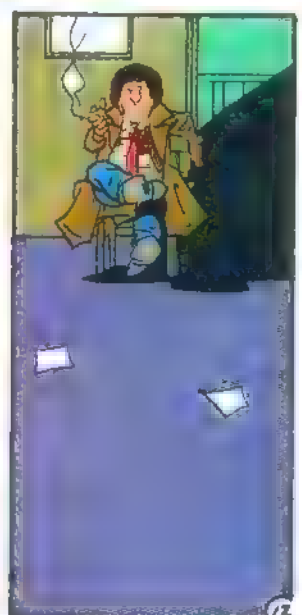
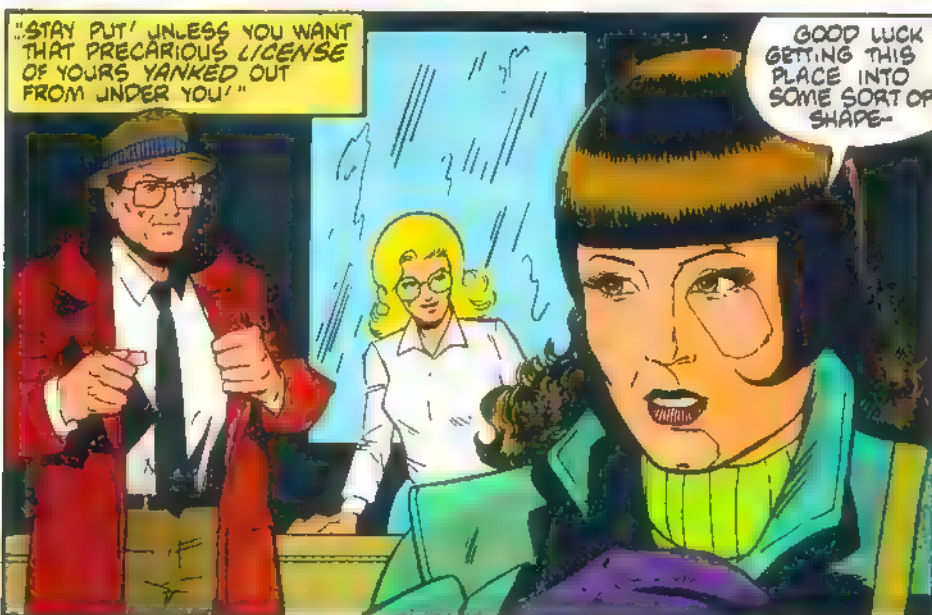
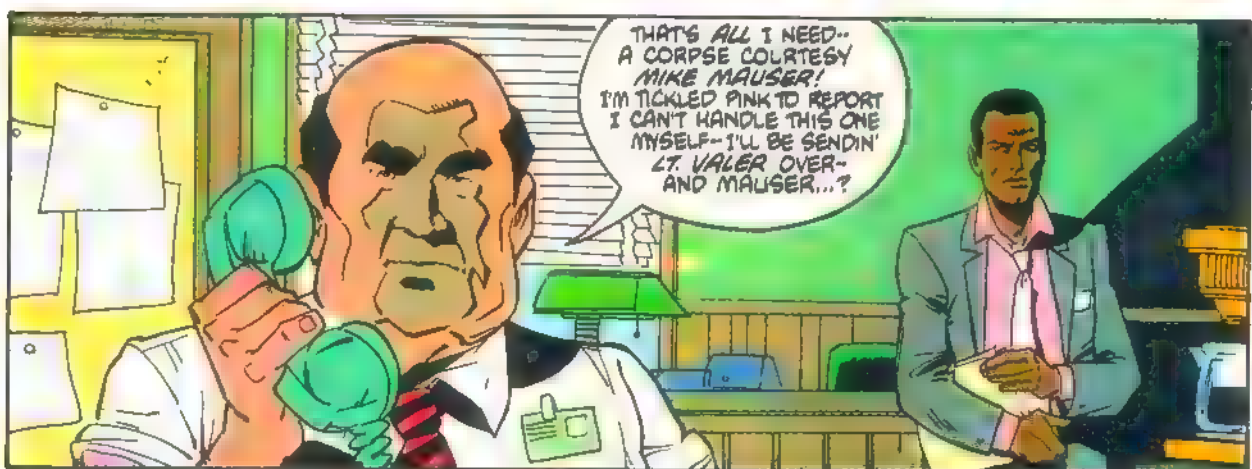
OH, I DECIDED TO GO TO THE SHOW WITHOUT SUZIE--WANTED SOME TIME ALONE--

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT FOLLOWING SIMONE THE NEXT TIME SHE GOES OUT--BUT I'M AFRAID IF I FOUND HER WITH ANOTHER MAN, I'D MURDER HIM WITH MY BARE HANDS!

BETTER WEAR GLOVES







Normally, the legwork on a domestic case like this was something I'd turn over to one of my associates-- Roger Freemont or Dan Green--But Dan was laid up in the hospital, and Roger was busy putting our files back in order.

And, as Effie would be first to tell you, I was anxious to leave house-cleaning to her. Being boss does give one certain privileges.

IS THAT A COMIC BOOK SHOP?

IT SURE IS--RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACK YARD. MIGHT AS WELL START RIGHT HERE--

Cassandra
comics
and stories

HEY-- AIN'T THIS THE BUILDING WHERE THAT LADY R.I. PAL OF YOURS IS SETTING UP, LIEUTENANT?

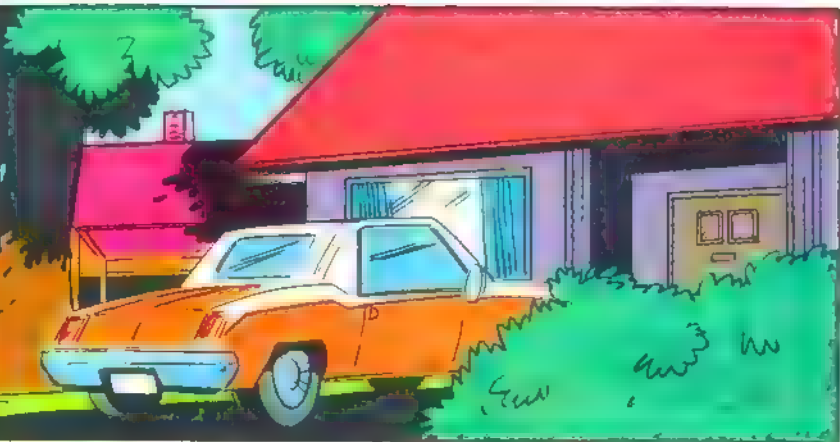
PRETTY COINCIDENTAL, A DEAD BODY TURNIN' UP ON THE PREMISES AND ALL--

THE ARTICLES IN THAT PRICE GUIDE SHOULD GIVE YOU PLENTY OF BACKGROUND ON THE COMIC'S HOBBY, LADY--

THANKS.

OVERPRICE
STREETGUIDE

A domestic case is like any other—in its way—a *mystery*. Why was Woodrow Kirby's wife straying, if indeed she was? To answer any such question, *background* is needed—and I started in the suburban home of Simone Kirby's sister—

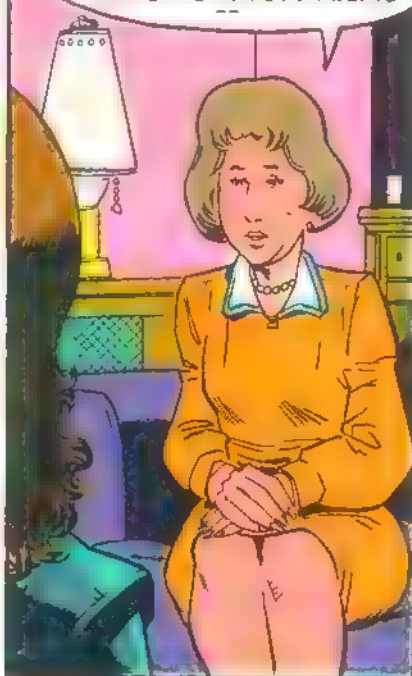


Considering the *delicacy* of the situation, however, I had to begin with a standard investigative technique: *lying*.

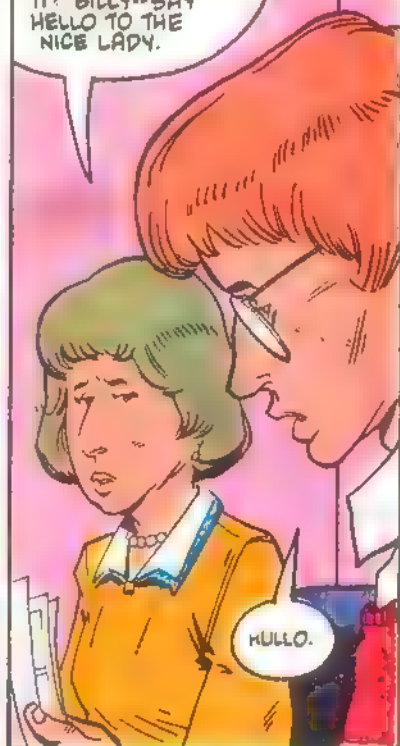
IT'S A SIMPLE INSURANCE MATTER, MRS. FREEMAN—WE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE *RELIABILITY* OF THE KIRBYS.



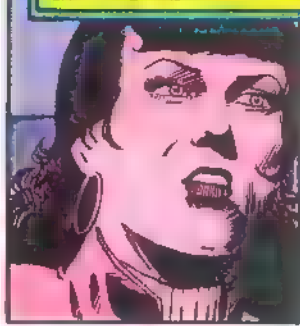
WHY, SIMONE AND WOODY ARE *WONDERFUL* PEOPLE—THEY'RE LIKE *SECOND PARENTS* TO OUR LITTLE BILLY—GETTING HIM INTERESTED IN COMICS—ENCOURAGING HIS ARTISTIC TALENTS



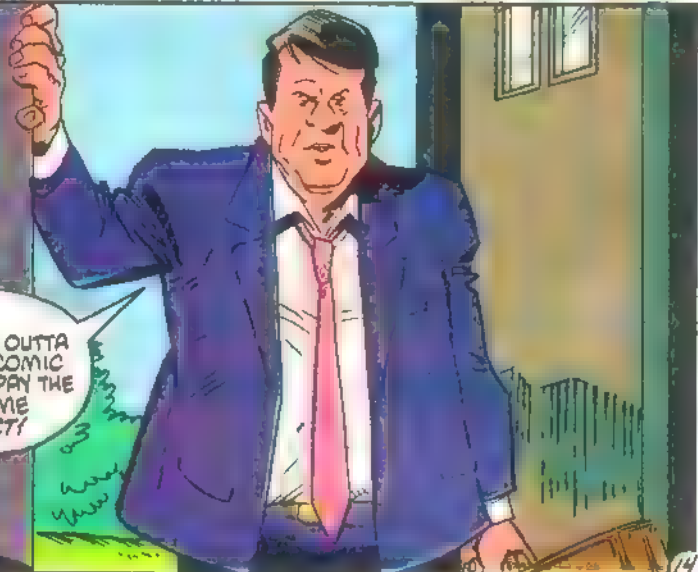
HERE'S BILLY NOW, MS., UH, TREE, WAS IT? BILLY—SAY HELLO TO THE NICE LADY.

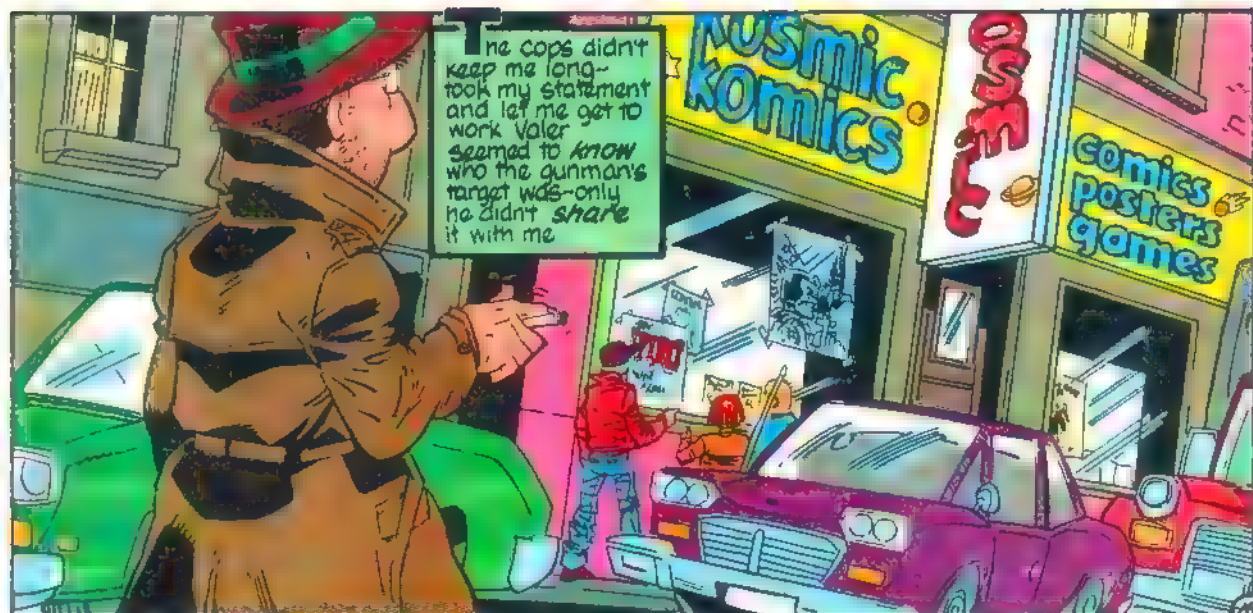


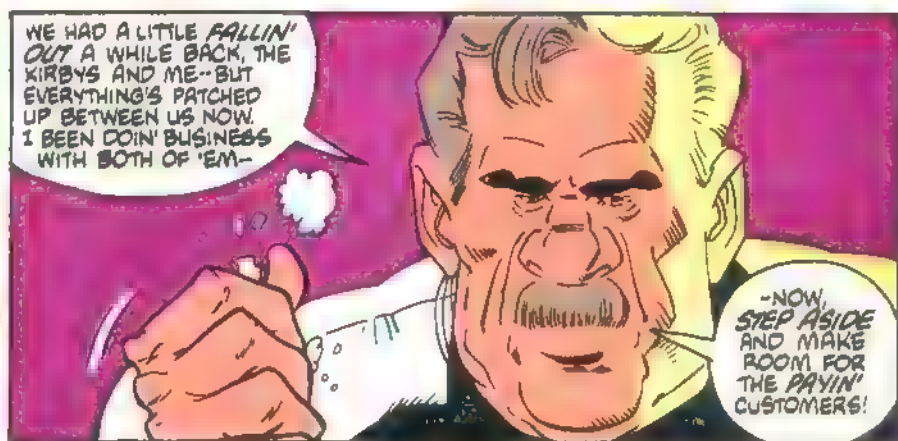
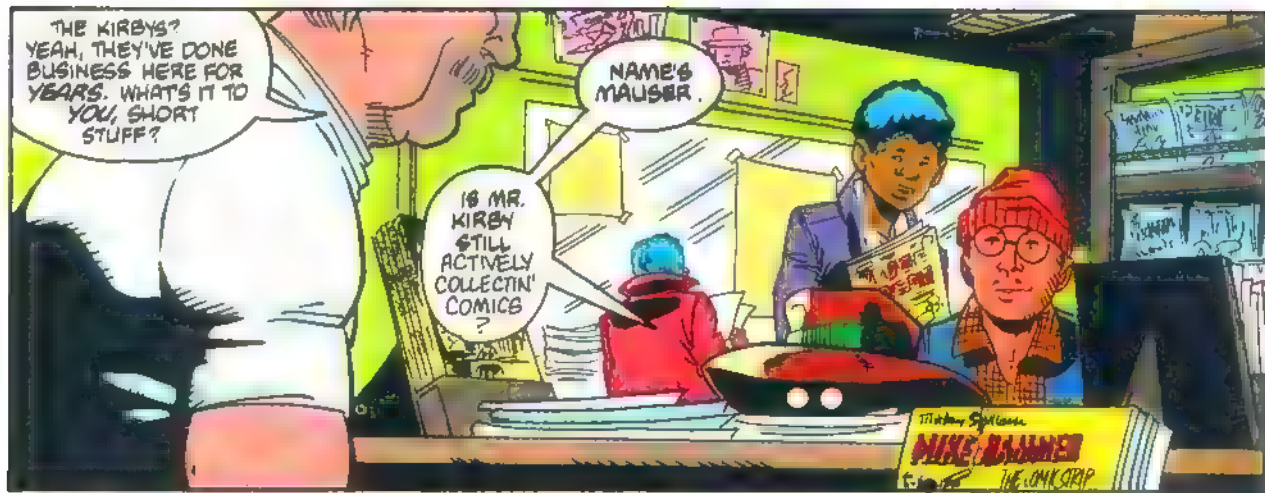
The kid seemed *less rude* than merely *introversed*, in his own little four-color world—but suddenly, somebody came in the front door, with a *less understanding* attitude than mine—



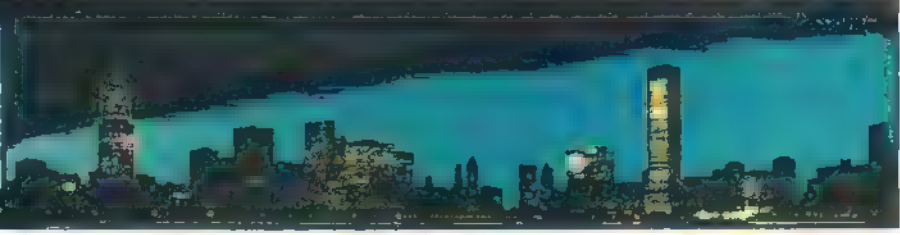
GET YOUR NOSE OUTTA THAT DAMN COMIC BOOK AND PAY THE LADY SOME *RESPECT!*







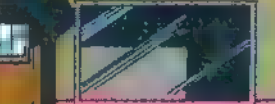
It seemed that *Kosmo Kosmic*--which was what the shopowner called himself--had been mixed up in some fast-buck schemes that'd led the Kirbys to take their comic book club elsewhere...



So *Kosmic Comics* was no longer affiliated with the comics club, and wasn't a part of the monthly convention, either--which cost *Kosmo* some good will and some bucks.

☆ **kosmic comics** ☆

comics posters games **Kosmic**

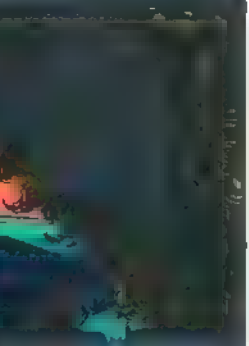
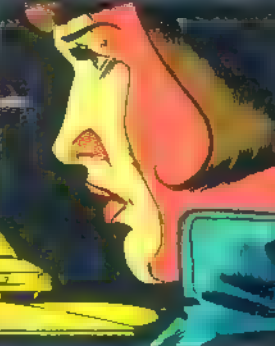


Kosmo was said to be mixed up in the sale of forged comic art to unsuspecting fans

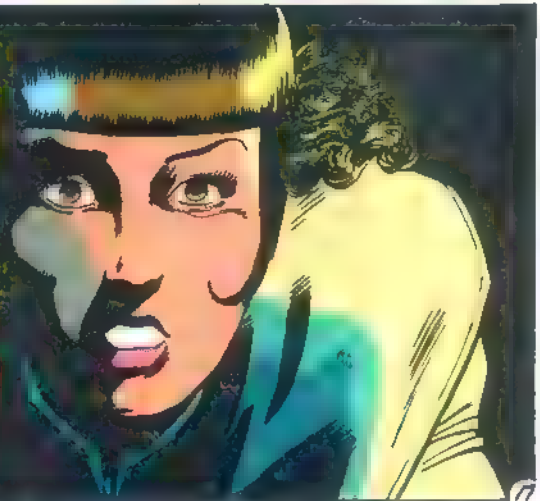
And now, here I was, hours later back at *Kosmic Comics*, having followed Woodrow Kirby here--

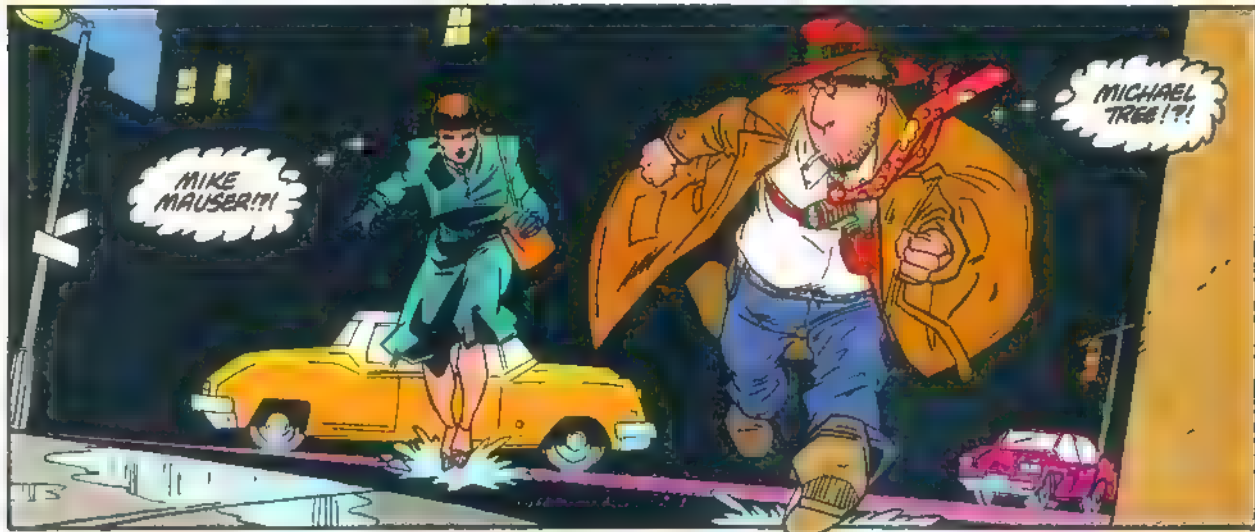


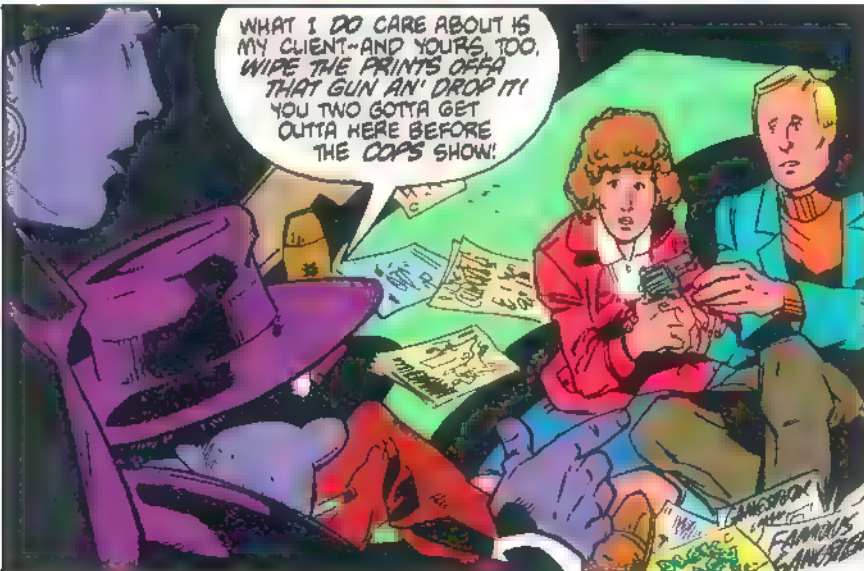
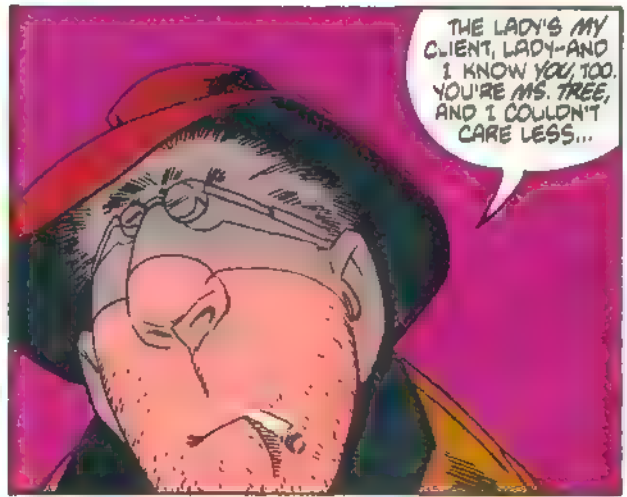
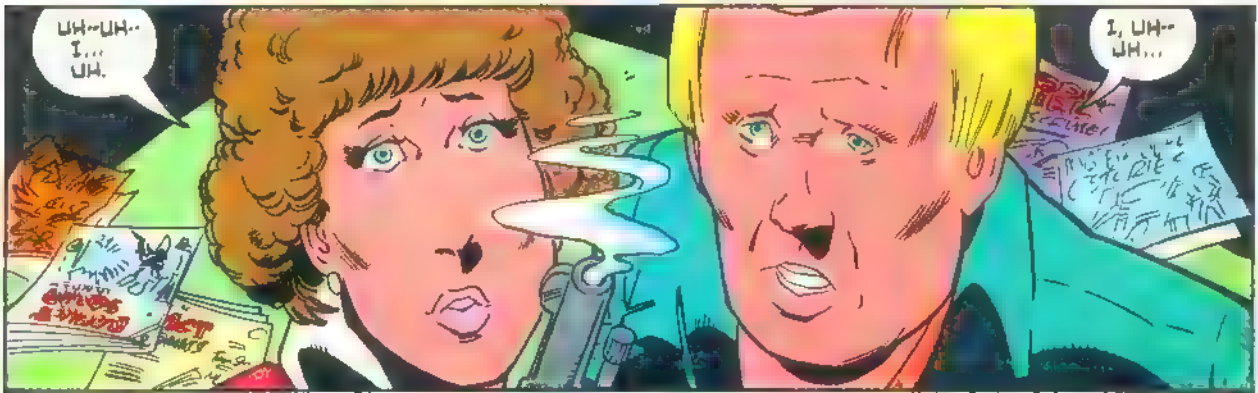
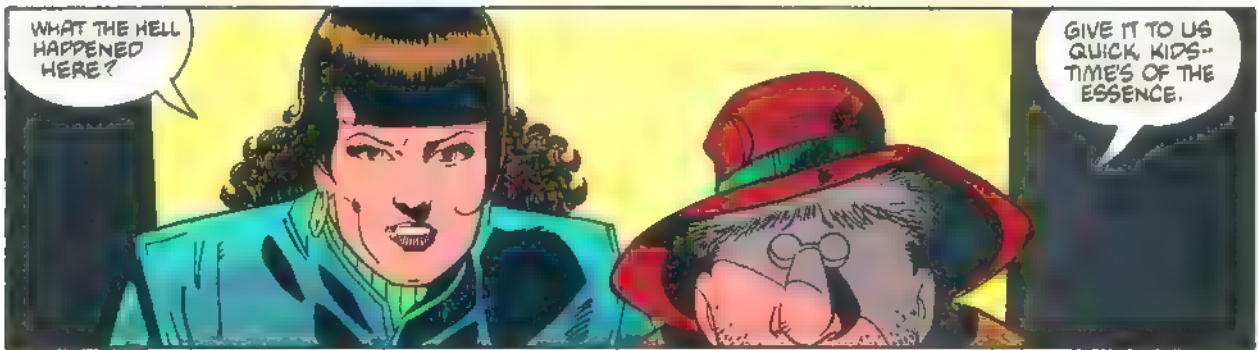
I followed Simone Kirby to this place, called *Kosmic Comics*, not fifteen minutes ago; and now, her husband, my client enters-- what was going on here?

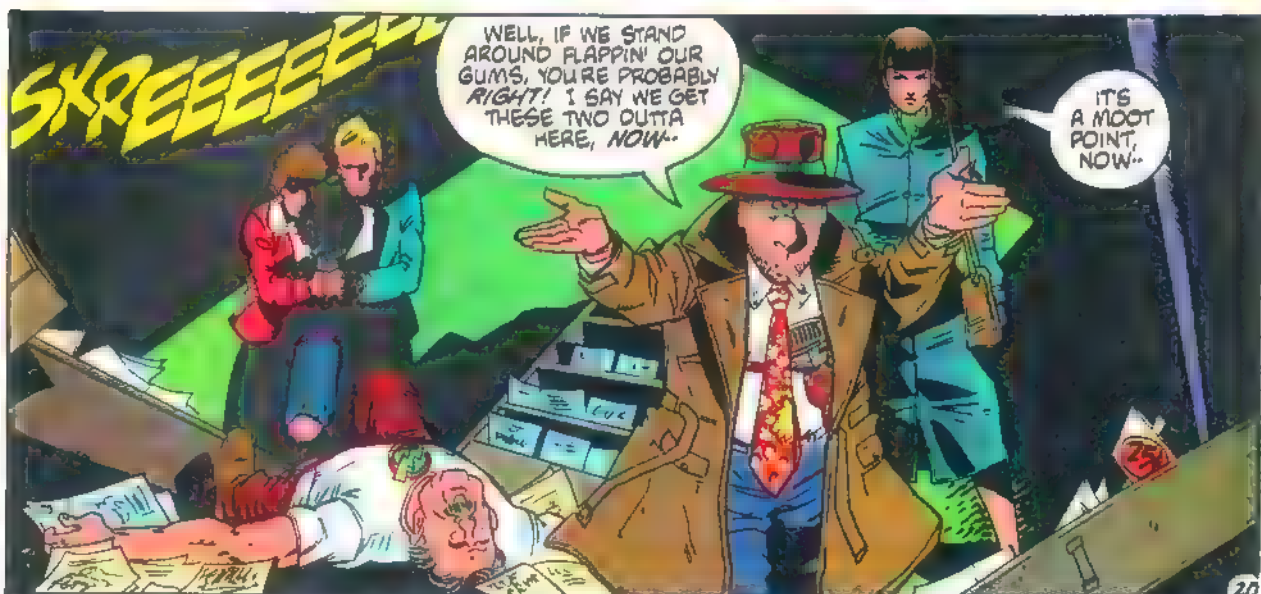
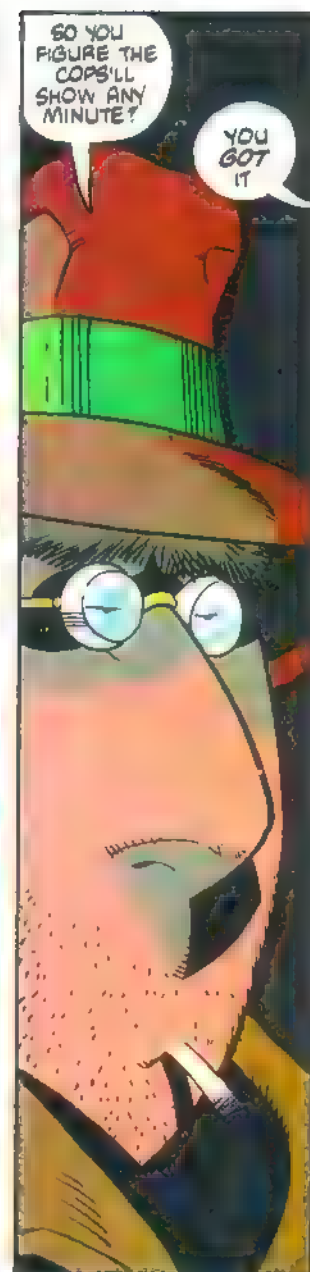
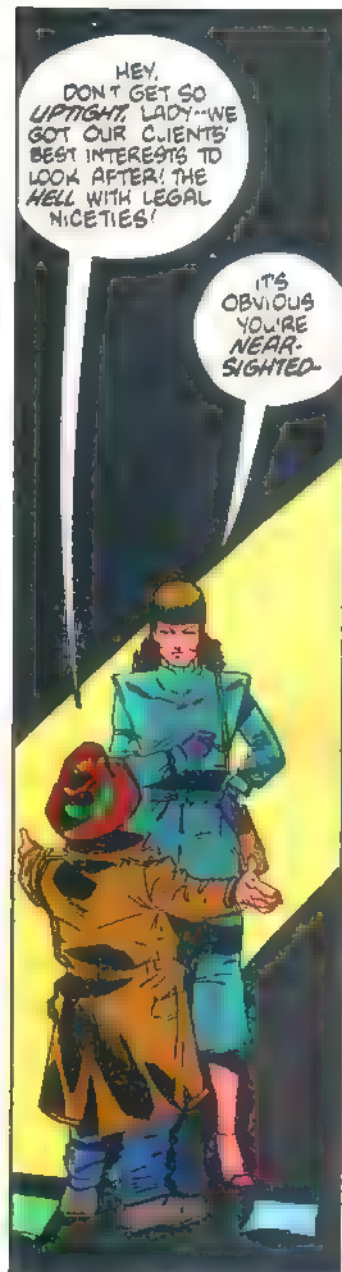


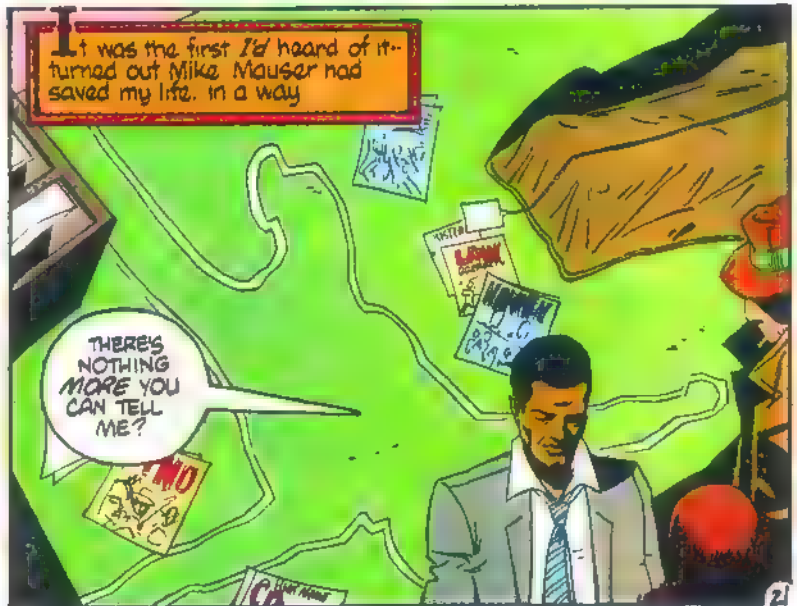
BANG!



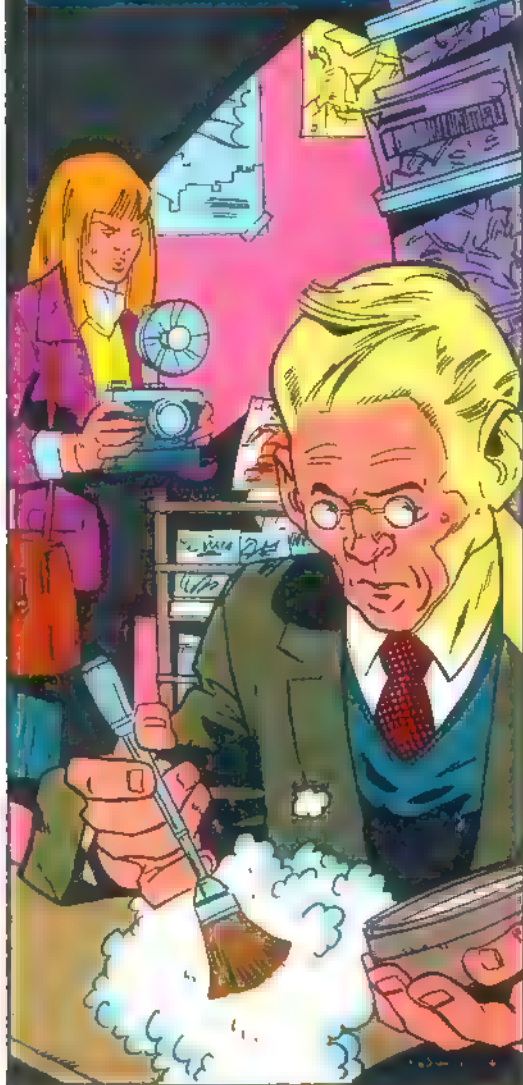








Sorry, Rafe-I can't tell you anymore than that Mauser and I have been investigating a *non-criminal* matter for the Kirbys."



WE CAN'T TELL YOU ANY MORE. IT'D BE A VIOLATION OF OUR CLIENTS' CONFIDENCE.

YEAH-- WE GOTTA CONFER WITH THEIR LAWYER, FIRST.

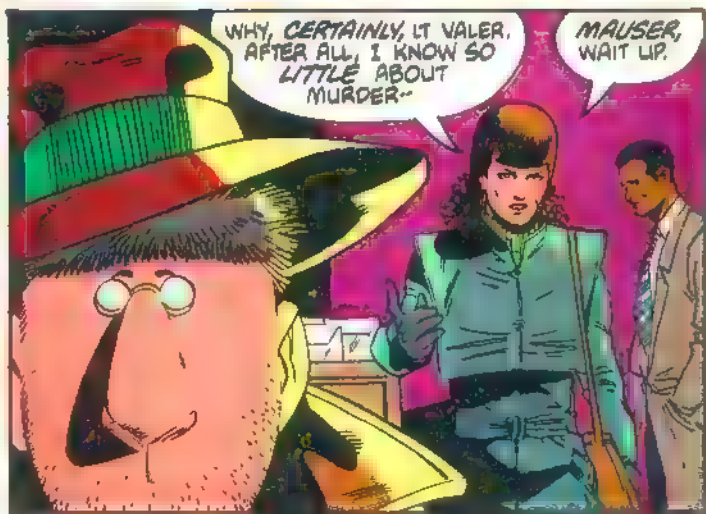


YEAH, YOU DO THAT, NOW, WHY DON'T THE BOTH OF YOU JUST GO, AND LEAVE THIS CRIME SCENE TO THE EXPERTS.



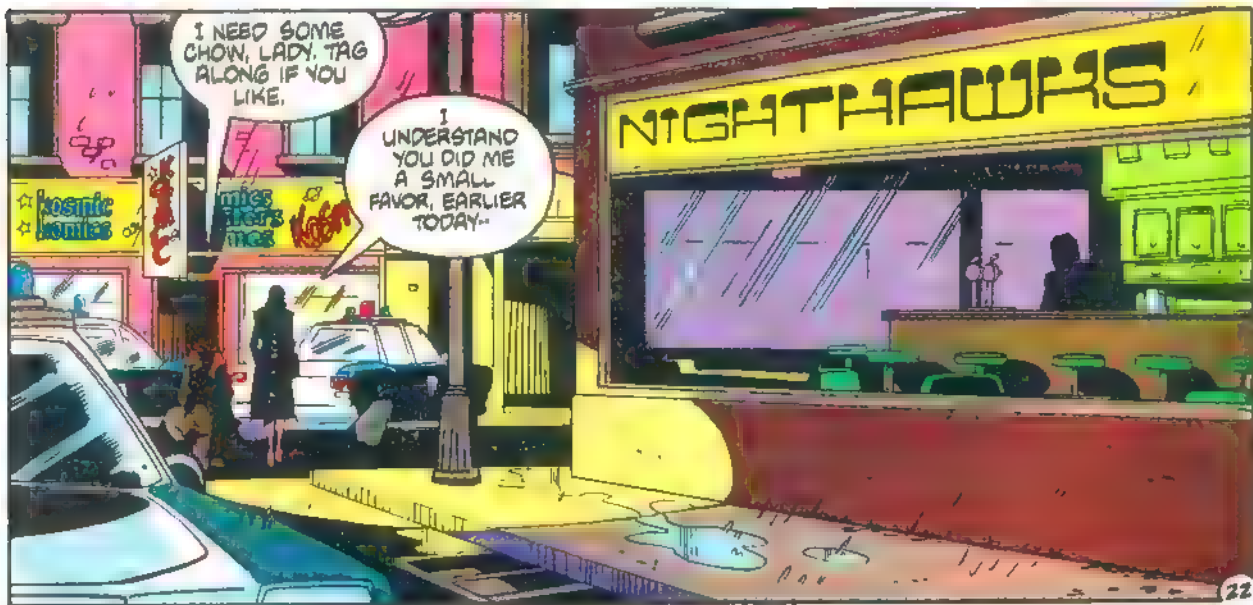
WHY, CERTAINLY, IT VALER. AFTER ALL, I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT MURDER--

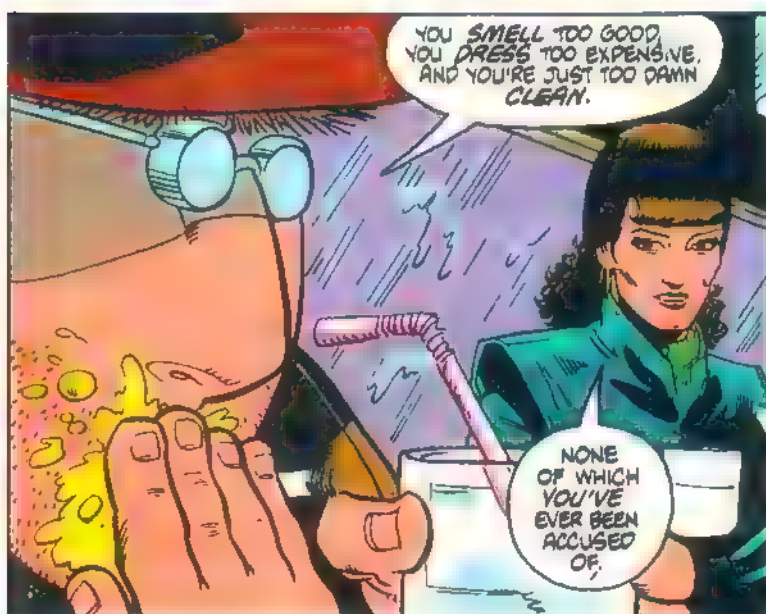
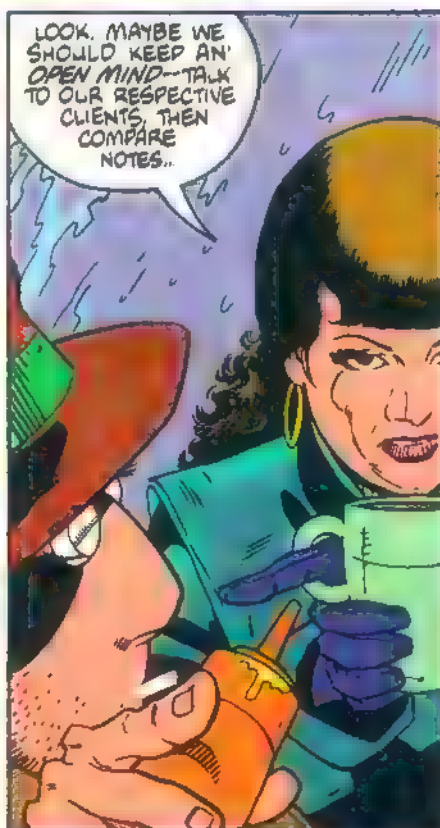
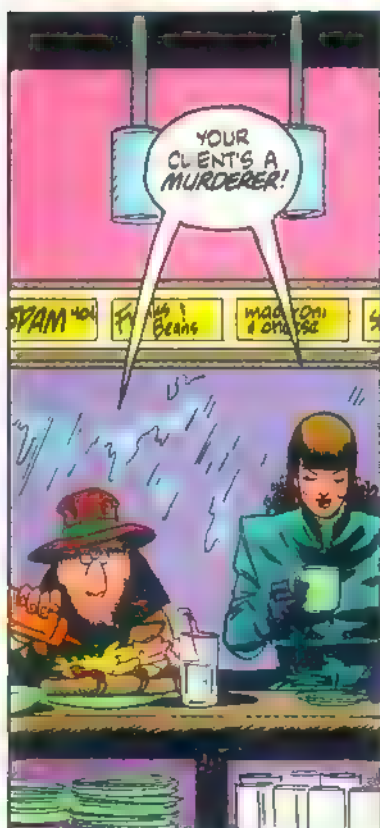
MAUSER, WAIT UP.



I NEED SOME CHOW, LADY. TAG ALONG IF YOU LIKE.

I UNDERSTAND YOU DID ME A SMALL FAVOR, EARLIER TODAY--







I AIN'T VIOLATIN' MY CLIENT'S TRUST, LADY. MAYBE YOU COUNTRY CLUB TYPES SELL EACH OTHER OUT FOR THE RIGHT STOCK OPTION, BUT MAUSER'S GOT INTEGRITY!



NOT TO MENTION LICE. ANYWAY, YOU'RE DREAMING IN THE FIRST PLACE, MICKEY—I WOULDN'T WORK WITH YOU EVEN IF YOU WERE TALLER.

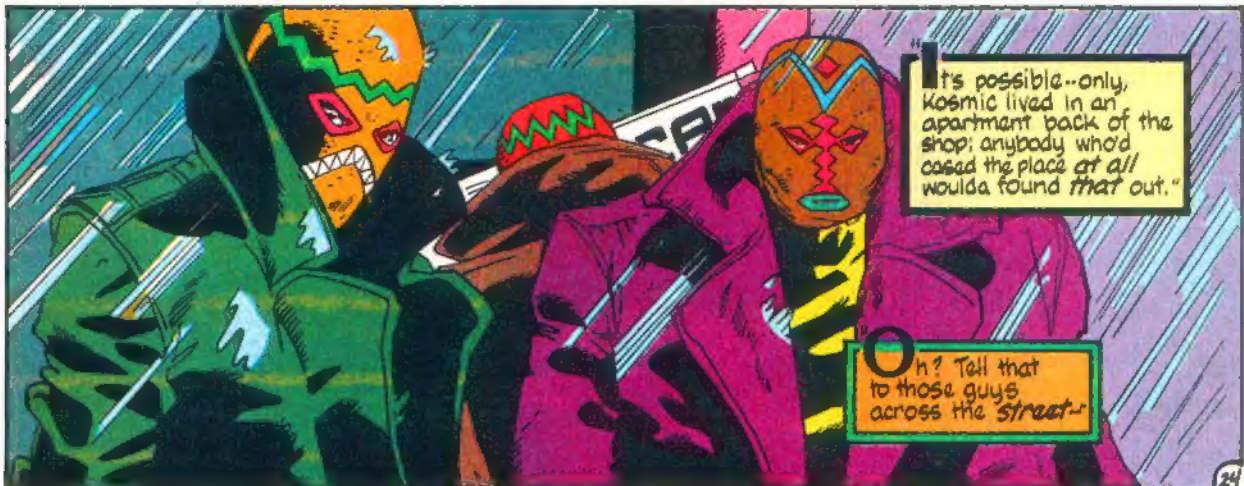
DON'T CALL ME MICKEY.



YOU KNOW, KOSMIC KOMICS HAS THE BIGGEST, MOST VALUABLE INVENTORY OF OLD COMICS IN THE CITY—MAYBE THIS HAS *NOTHIN'* TO DO WITH OUR CLIENTS' DOMESTIC TROUBLES—

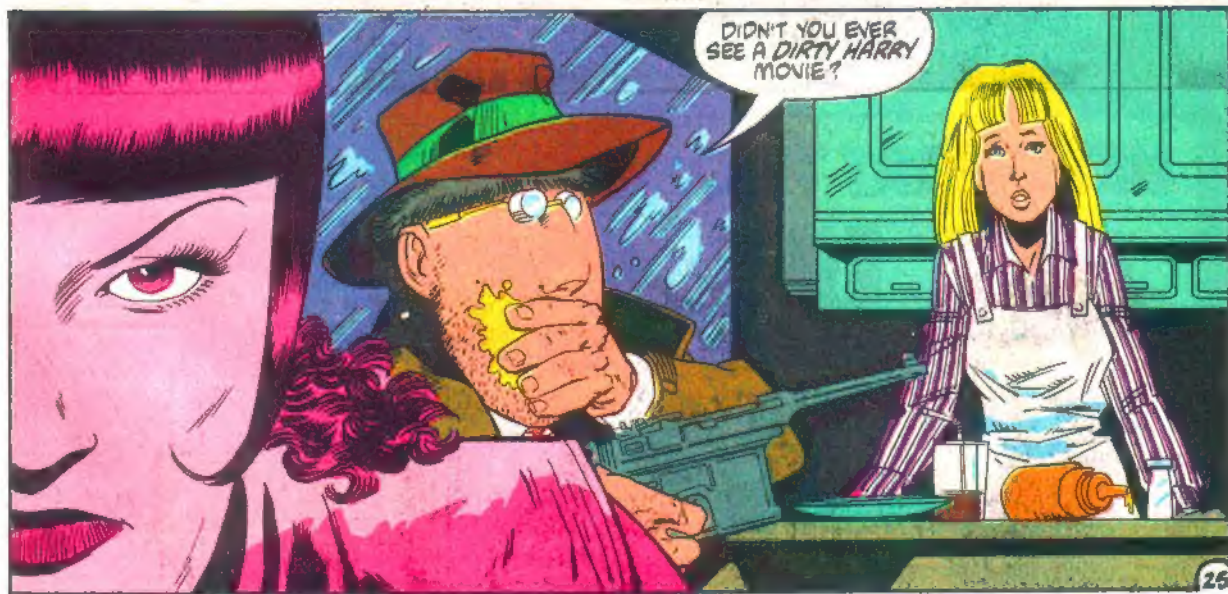
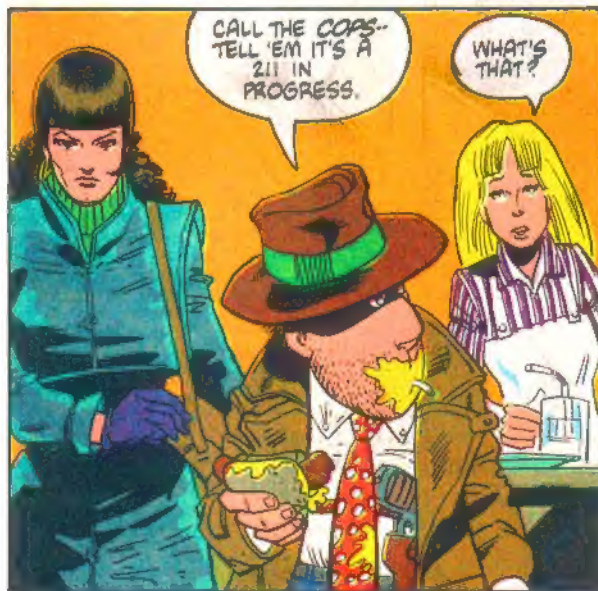



YOU MEAN, KOSMO KOSMIC INTERRUPTED A THIEF WHO WAS AFTER THE COMICS, AND GOT KILLED IN THE PROCESS? AND OUR CLIENTS JUST HAPPENED TO BE THERE AT THE TIME?



It's possible--only, Kosmic lived in an apartment back of the shop; anybody who'd cased the place at all woulda found *that* out.

Oh? Tell that to those guys across the street--





I GUESS
SOMETIMES
FUNNY BOOKS
AIN'T NO
LAUGHIN'
MATTER, HUH,
MS. TREE?

MAUSER,
I'M NOT EVEN
SMILING--

NEXT--PART TWO:

**ALL IN COLOR
FOR A CRIME**

THE DEEP

Years ago, two young hoods flipped a coin for control of their territory. The loser left town — word was he'd become a powerful hood elsewhere. . .

Now, years later, the "winner" was dead — murdered — and on the street the word was out: the Deep was back!

Two rival gangs — as well as beautiful Hellen Tate — assume a power play is in the works; but Deep is not as interested in taking over for his dead childhood chum as in finding a murderer. . .

The Deep (1960) is the metaphorical tale of a tough guy's comeback, as it was murder-master Spillane's first novel in almost ten years. Both the Mick and the Deep lived up to their legends.

Based upon material from **One Lonely Knight: Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer**, by Max Allan Collins and James L. Traylor, published by Popular Press.

